

## **In Commemoration - James M. Foster**

As many of you know, James M. Foster (Jim) passed away suddenly on April 26, 2004 in Clark County, Vancouver, Washington. Jim, who joined ORM in 1998 as the EEO Manager of the Vancouver Field Office and beginning in 2003 was the EEO Regional Manager for Western Operations (Vancouver, Los Angeles, Palo Alto, Long Beach, and Sepulveda offices), was a U.S. Air Force veteran who served in Viet Nam.



*James "Jim" Foster*

At the time of his death Jim was a Staff Assistant to Malcolm Porter, former Chief Operating Officer (COO). Mr. Porter described Jim as "a person of high moral belief and strong character. His military and VA careers took him to a variety of sites where he always sought public service through community service."

During his many years with VA, Jim was recognized as a dedicated and hardworking employee who always gave "his best." Fifty-nine years old at the time of his death, he is remembered by his family and friends as a model person devoted to his church and family, who was always willing to give a smile, a gentle hug, or words of encouragement. Born in 1945 in Pittsburgh, PA, he leaves three children: Jamie, James M. III, and Julie as well as four sisters, two brothers, and other relatives. His funeral and burial took place in Coraopolis, PA on May 4, 2004.

His many friends and coworkers in ORM and throughout VA will dearly miss Jim.

# ORM NEWS

From the Office of the  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
Resolution Management  
Department of Veterans Affairs



May 2004

## *From the Deputy Assistant Secretary*



### **Veterans – Our Ultimate Customer**

The work we do, through our programs and services, has one aim – to support the work being done by VA employees who provide health care, benefits, and a final resting place to our nation's veterans. It is important that we understand how our roles in ORM fit into VA's mission of providing, in Secretary Principi's words – *"high quality, prompt and seamless service to veterans."*

The Secretary, in his April 9<sup>th</sup> message to all VA employees said, *"In the VA system we have the unique opportunity and privilege of serving our nation's heroes. I know that you share my pride in providing veterans with the exceptional service they so richly deserve. Lets work together to uphold the sacred calling each of us has – to care for those who have borne the battle and for their families."*

Our connection to service to veterans and their families starts when an employee contacts ORM and ends when the complaint is resolved. The goal of counseling, procedural determinations, investigations, and mediation is to help employees and managers identify and address the causes of complaints so that they can return their full attention to serving our nation's veterans. When facilities apply what they learn from root cause analysis, environmental assessments, and training programs, the results are better working environments that lead to improved services to veterans.

#### **In this edition:**

In Commemoration – James M. Foster.....	Page 1
Veterans - Our Ultimate Customer.....	Page 2
ORM Employer of Choice Award..	Page 3
QA Corner – Quality is the Word..	Page 4
EEO Policy Revised to Include Sexual Orientation.....	Page 5
ORM 2003 Annual Report.....	Page 5
Government Travel Charge Cards.....	Page 6
Office Notes.....	Page 7
National Moment of Remembrance.....	Page 8

*Continued on the next page*

We should keep in mind what General Omar Bradley, VA's first Administrator, said, ***"We are dealing with veterans, not procedures, with their problems not ours."***

Everything we do in ORM is part of VA's effort to serve veterans. It's important that we do not forget how we fit into this process and that our motto – ***"Honoring and serving our Nation's Veterans by promoting discrimination-free environments"*** – serves as a reminder that we play an important role in the delivery of care and services to veterans. By providing quality service to the employees who contact us for assistance, we help provide high quality service to our ultimate customer – ***Veterans.***

As we carry out our daily responsibilities we should remember that we are working with individuals and not just paper, individuals who provide treatment and services to veterans. Finally, the services we provide should be delivered with no less urgency or quality than we want for ourselves.

James S. Jones

# Program Highlights

## First Annual “ORM Employer of Choice Award”

Congratulations to Northeastern Operations (Lyons Field Office and its satellite offices: New York, Pittsburgh, Bedford, and Lebanon) for being chosen to receive the Office of Resolution Management’s first annual “*ORM Employer of Choice Award*” in recognition of its efforts towards creating an “Employer of Choice” environment within ORM during 2003. The primary criteria for this award are employee responses to our all employee survey. Each field office and program area was asked to make submissions for this award by March 29, 2004.



The ORM Employer of Choice award is based on three criteria:

- ❑ ***Employee Satisfaction*** – Overall employee satisfaction as shown on ORM’s All Employee Survey.
- ❑ ***Contributions to the Mission of the Organization*** – Measures performance towards meeting or exceeding quality and timeliness standards based upon established Performance Monitors and man-hours devoted outside of the complaint process (i.e., ADR, training, conferences and other activities) based upon Field Office Activity Reports and Quality Assurance data when available.
- ❑ ***External Customer Satisfaction*** – Currently based on survey responses received at both the Informal stage (Counseling) and Formal stage (Investigation).

Northeastern Operations is recognized for its outstanding contributions in the areas of internal and external customer satisfaction. Most noteworthy were the value-added initiatives undertaken by staff in the areas of team building, conflict management, and rewards and recognition programs. These value-added efforts fostered internal cohesiveness, improved morale, increased productivity levels and ultimately resulted in high levels of employee satisfaction that can be used as “best practices” ORM wide.

The criteria for nominations for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual ORM Employer of Choice Award (2004) will be posted in the July 2004 issue of ORM News. Contact Brenda J. Lewis, Customer Service Manager for more information. ■

## ***QA CORNER – Quality is the Word***

*By Peggy Joyner, Quality Assurance Manager*

ORM is on the brink of becoming a leader in the world of electronic case management of EEO files. In an effort to produce an effective and efficient records management system, ORM is moving toward enhancing the Web Based Tracking System (WBTS) by developing electronic records to be appended to the newly enhanced WBTS. This effort will greatly assist ORM in the reduction of paperwork and the elimination of file storage concerns.

Several months ago each field manager appointed an individual from their office to act as the office's Quality Assurance Representative. These employees are responsible for verifying data in the WBTS, ensuring documents are scanned properly, and for reviewing the quality of the information in the system. The following individuals have been identified as QA representatives:

Northeastern Operations (Lyons, NJ)	Robyn Lambombarda Ceil Stark
Mid-Atlantic Operations (Washington, DC)	Juanita Toney Ronnica Snowden
Southern Operations (Bay Pines, FL)	Linnell Baker Kelly Bosner
Mid-South Operations (Little Rock, AR)	Kathy Howse William Suddeth
Central Plains Operations (Houston, TX)	Annie Fontenet Marilyn Calloway
Great Lakes Operations (Cleveland, OH)	Davidemir Ruple Collette Hill
Western Operations (Vancouver, WA)	Alma (Letty) Dominguez Christine Jorgensen

### **Quality Checks**

QA Representatives will conduct quality checks at various stages during and after the creation of an electronic file. Quality checks will include a review of all documents scanned into each section of the file to ensure that the necessary information has been placed in the appropriate tabbed sections and that the appropriate data fields have

*Continued on the next page*

been completed. The reviewer will ensure that documents are appropriately scanned, are easy to read, and that documents are aligned properly in the system.

#### What You Can Do

We also need your help to ensure that information in the electronic file (WBTS) is complete and readable. You can do this by following the instructions for scanning and placing information into the WBTS and by pointing out any errors you find in these files to your QA Representative. For more information, contact Peggy Joyner, Quality Assurance Manager at (202) 501-2829 or your Quality Assurance Representative. ■

## **EEO Policy Revised to include Sexual Orientation**

The Office of Special Counsel (OSC) revised its policy on April 8, 2004, to include *sexual orientation* as grounds for a discrimination complaint. Bowing to pressure from the White House, OSC reinstated this policy that had been put on hold in February of this year.

“It is the policy of this administration that discrimination in the federal workforce on the basis of sexual orientation is prohibited, said Scott Block, the head of the agency. OSC investigates and prosecutes claims of discrimination against federal workers and job applicants.

*Sources are the Washington Post and Washington Times, 4/9/04.* ■

## **ORM 2003 Annual Report**

Copies of the fiscal year 2003 ORM Annual Report have been sent to all employees. This report is also available on-line at <http://vaww.va.gov/orm>. The DAS is asking that you take a moment to review this report and to make any suggestions on ways we can better illustrate ORM's accomplishments and programs as we begin preparation of the 2004 report. The DAS would also like to include photographs of ORM employees at work in the 2004 report. Suggestions for the annual report and digital photographs of employees at work can be sent by e-mail to Tyrone Eddins or Terry Washington. ■

## Government Travel Charge Cards

- ❑ Government travel charge cards are to be used **only** for authorized official travel expenses. Unauthorized use of the card will result in disciplinary action.
- ❑ Government travel charge cards **are not** to be used for personal purposes, including allowing family members to use the card.
- ❑ Using the card for personal purchases or ATM withdrawals unrelated to official travel is **prohibited**.
- ❑ Government travel charge cards will be used for travel advances, lodging, meals, car rentals, and miscellaneous subsistence expenses related to official travel.
- ❑ ATM advances are obtained solely for authorized government travel. **Abuse of ATM privileges will result in disciplinary action.**
- ❑ Charge cards will be suspended when an outstanding balance becomes **60 days past due**. The charge card may be unilaterally suspended without prior consultation. **In all cases, outstanding balances must be paid in full. Partial payments are not permitted.**
- ❑ When an outstanding balance becomes **120 days past due**, charge card privileges will be cancelled and an interest penalty will be assessed on the overdue amount. Employees will not be reimbursed for the interest penalty. When an account is **131 days late**, employee nonpayment information may be reported to the credit bureau.



See *Use of the Government Travel Charge Card*, VA Handbook 0631.1, for more information on VA's policy or you can contact Barbara Scott at (202) 501- 2817 if you have questions concerning this topic. ■

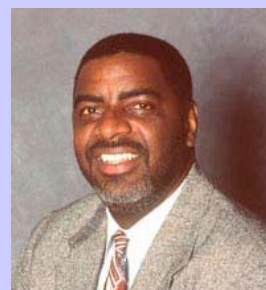




# Office Notes

## **Office of the DAS**

**Malcolm Porter**, former Chief Operating Officer (COO) for ORM, has joined Veterans Health Administration's VISN 8 as an EEO Manager effective April 30, 2004. Prior to assuming his responsibilities as the COO in April 2001, Malcolm served as the Field Manager at the ORM Bay Pines Field Office from April of 1998 to April of 2001. In his e-mail to all ORM employees, Malcolm stated, *"It has been my pleasure and honor to work with and for each of you during my short stay with ORM. I will continue to interact with many of you and look forward to the new challenges before me."* We wish Malcolm success in his new endeavor.



## **Office of Policy and Compliance**

The Office of Policy and Compliance takes great pleasure in announcing the selection of **Lillette Turner** to the position of Chief Policy Officer. *Congratulations Lillette!*



## **Great Lakes Operations (Cleveland Field Office)**

**Barbara Wilson-Coleman**, EEO Counselor, has made it official, after 30 years and eleven months she will be retiring on June 3, 2004.

## **Mid-Atlantic Operations (Washington Field Office)**

**Ebonie Janifer** returned to ORM as an EEO Assistant in February 2004. She attended Drexel University for two years and previously worked in the DAS's office in 1999 and with the Washington Field Office during 2000 – 2001 as an EEO Assistant while she was a student. Ebonie is an extremely proficient employee and we welcome her return to the Washington Field Office.

**Caulton Allen**, EEO Investigator also returned to work at the Washington Field Office effective February 2004. We would like to extend a hearty welcome to Carlton who returns with extensive experience as an EEO Investigator.

A potluck lunch was held on May 17<sup>th</sup> for **Renee Bragg**, EEO Counselor, who is transferring from the Washington Field Office to the St. Louis, MO satellite office. Renee was showered with gifts and well wishes from her coworkers. She will be missed here in DC.





# Did You Know?



**MEMORIAL DAY - MAY 31, 2004  
3 P.M.**

***NATIONAL MOMENT OF REMEMBRANCE***

**“One Nation, One Moment—Let us  
never forget”**

More than 41 million men and women have served in the Armed Forces of this country and over a million have died defending it. On Memorial Day we pause to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice so that we can remain free.

On this Memorial Day, please join your fellow Americans in the “*National Moment of Remembrance*” in honor of America’s fallen. The “*Moment*” is an act of national unity to honor America’s fallen. All Americans, wherever they are, at 3 p.m. local time, should pause for a moment of reflection honoring those who died for our country.



## ***CHECK OUT THE NEW 2004 CONSUMER ACTION HANDBOOK***

VA is a co-sponsor of the 2004 Consumer Action Handbook, a free 180-page guide designed to help citizens find the best and most direct solutions for their consumer problems and questions.

Syndicated advice columnist Dear Abby wrote in her column that a copy of the Handbook “belongs in every household.”

Produced by GSA’s Federal Citizen Information Center, the handbook offers tips on topics such as buying and leasing cars, protecting your privacy, avoiding fraud and shopping from home. It also includes a sample complaint form to use as a guide from writing letters, faxes and e-mails.

The directory portion of the handbook lists thousands of names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses for Better Business Bureaus, corporate consumer contacts, federal agencies, and state and local consumer protection offices.

You can access the Web edition of the Handbook and order a free copy at <http://www.consumeraction.gov/>.



ORM NEWS is a monthly publication of the Office of Resolution Management (ORM). Contact Terry Washington, External Affairs Program, by e-mail or by calling (202) 501-2800 concerning the content of this newsletter. Back copies of the newsletter can be found on our Web site at [www.va.gov/orm](http://www.va.gov/orm)